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ABSTRACT

This study systematically examines the reading habits and in-house library use of a group of survey respondents in the Independent Living complex at a retirement community located in Westlake, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. The residents responded to an anonymous questionnaire requesting information about their reading habits and their preferences for various library services. Results were cross-tabulated with the respondents' age group, gender, living arrangement, highest level of education, and occupation. While the importance of reading was evident throughout all age groups, it peaked in the 80- to 89-year-old group, which was also the largest in number. Other findings include more interest in book talks among residents who live alone, more interest in audio books among women than men, and no particular relationship between occupation or educational level and time spent reading. The study has as its framework a discussion of literature on information sources and formats targeting the aging, library outreach programs for the aging, and physical, transportational, and sociotechnical obstacles to library patronage by the aging. A sample questionnaire is appended, and 18 tables illustrate the data. (Contains 30 references.) (BEW)

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ED 390 412

A STUDY OF READING HABITS AND LIBRARY USE AT WESTLAKE VILLAGE WESTLAKE, OHIO

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Jane Varley

May, 1995

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ABSTRACT

This study concerns itself with the reading habits and in-house library use of a group of survey respondents in the Independent Living complex at a retirement community located in Westlake, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. The residents responded to an anonymous questionnaire requesting information about their reading habits and their preference for various library services. Results were cross tabulated with the respondents' age group, gender, living arrangement, highest level of education, and occupation. Age was the most important factor in the cross tabulations. While the importance of reading was evident throughout all age groups, it peaked in the 80-89 year old group, which was also the largest in number.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

With the graying of America, it has become common to see stories in print about the many problems facing the American populace as the baby-boom generation heads toward old age. Few, if any, studies of this kind give a positive spin to the story. Instead they dwell on the enormous costs involved for health care, Social Security, and community resources to sustain this generation in its later years.

It is true that the current over-65 group consists of 32.3 million people comprising 12.7% of the population (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1994, 32), and that this figure is expected to grow to 60 million by the year 2025 (Falcigno and Guynup 1984, 25). In addition, Americans are not only more numerous, but are also living longer. Whereas in 1970 the average life expectancy was 70.8 years of age, in 1991 it had risen to 75.5. The projection for the year 2010 is 77.9 years of age (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1994, 87). An ongoing study by demographer James Vaupel at Duke University and Denmark's Odense University to research patterns of aging in developed countries has found that, in the leading industrialized nations, the number of centenarians has been doubling every decade since 1950, producing an annual growth rate in this category of 5% to 11%. In addition to this finding, Dr. Vaupel's group has discovered that there has also been a gradual decline in the mortality rates

among those in their 80s and 90s, both for men and women (Otten 1995, B-1).

Rather than thinking of this population group as a dark cloud gathering on the horizon, what if older Americans were thought of as a resource, whose vast pool of expertise and experience could be tapped by the rest of the population? What if younger people valued the presence of older people and sought them out for wisdom and companionship? What if the reverse were true, and older people valued the presence of younger people and sought them out for understanding and fresh ideas?

Right now these thoughts seem a bit utopian, but such a paradigm shift could happen if the two groups had an appropriate place to meet and share. A logical common ground for this encounter to take place is the one that Vice-President Gore has proposed as the new home for the Information Superhighway-- the public library.

At this time librarians must still concern themselves with physically carting books to the locations where older adults reside in congregate living arrangements with varying levels of care, but some day soon perhaps the isolation and loneliness felt by many of these older adults (Chatman 1992, 80) will be mitigated by online connections to other people and their ideas in the world of cyberspace through programs sponsored by the public library. Whereas "outreach" and "extension" are now viewed almost solely in terms of books, perhaps soon "outreach" will take on a whole new meaning and extend to a much broader group of people.

Already outreach programs are changing, making use of the new applications available through the use of multimedia. A

nonprofit organization in Madison, Wisconsin called "Bi-Folkal Productions" has put together multimedia kits for use in senior centers, retirement complexes, and nursing homes to stimulate discussion among participants. Themes revolve around fashion, school days, the home front, and farm days, and are meant to encourage the active mode of participation rather than the passive mode of entertainment (Saunders 1992, 176). Reminiscences collected in such programs could be excellent candidates for a new oral history section of the local library, perhaps completed in cooperation with the local middle or junior high school.

On the national level, the National Council on the Aging has developed a program called "Silver Editions II," which centers around focused discussion groups led by local scholars. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Silver Editions II was offered during 1991 and focused on two series: "The Remembered Past: 1914-1945," and "The Search for Meaning: Insights through Literature, History and Art." For each series, NCOA created anthologies for the participants. Their ample use of illustrations was intended to spark discussion in the groups. In addition, there was a discussion leader's guide, and a detailed coordinator's handbook. The program was implemented at seven geographically dispersed libraries throughout the country, serving a total of forty-four groups. Endorsed by those who participated, one person said he wanted to "express 'sincere thanks to our library and the National Council on Aging for recognizing the fact that we older people need intellectual stimulation as much as physical to stay mentally alert and enjoy life'" (Liroff and Van Fleet 1992, 475).

The thoughts of this participant, expressing his gratitude for a worthwhile program, focus in on the core of the aging pattern, that is that many older people are still quite competent and capable with varying degrees of infirmity. Only 4% of the elderly population ever reach the stage of complete dependence (Heintz 1976, 6), a percentage vastly lower than current media offerings imply.

The elderly often have movement or vision problems that hinder them from visiting the library in person. If computers become as ubiquitous in the future as television sets are now, older people and others with vision difficulties or limited mobility might be well served by electronic books that could be downloaded at home and read in as large a font as the person desired. The library could offer this service in lieu of large print books (Burstein 1994).

As the population of older Americans grows in size, libraries will want to continue to provide outreach programs to this group of users. As Liroff and Van Fleet remark, "We cannot continue to view services to older adults as new or extra services. They are a continuation and adaptation of traditional services for people who have used the library for most of their lives" (Liroff and Van Fleet 1992, 476).

Purpose of the Study

To best serve the population of older adults, it is helpful to know the conditions that exist, including the reading habits and library use of this group. Few studies exist in this area at the present time.

This study will concern itself with the relationship of age, gender, education, and occupation to reading habits and library services desired by older adults. The purpose of the study is to contribute to the literature of the field so that local libraries can affirm or adjust their services to their older patrons.

Definition of Terms

The term "older adult" refers to persons between the ages of 60 and 109, because these are the age parameters of the population of the retirement complex surveyed in the study.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the residents of one retirement community in northeast Ohio, and is similar to a study done at a retirement community in central Ohio in 1993 (Emery 1993). The findings of this study add another part to a developing whole.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on library use and reading habits among older Americans is growing, but it is not always easy to locate. The most successful searches involved the Library Literature database (12/84-12/93) and the ERIC database (1982-12/93). Searching LISA (1/69-3/92) revealed little in English before the mid-1980s, although much was written in the Scandinavian countries about the elderly and various library programs set up to reach them.

The proliferation of retirement communities has only occurred in the last decade in the United States. To see whether any retrospective studies could be found in book form before 1980, OHIOLINK and CLEVNET were searched. Only one source appeared, a study by Heintz (1976), which actually pertains more closely to the "adults only" residential communities of two or three decades ago than it does to the independent living retirement communities of today. Nonetheless, Heintz addresses the lifestyle and life cycle changes of the elderly, as well as their voting patterns. Although she does not address library concerns at great length, she does provide a good retrospective statistical background for comparison with current trends.

Four other sources provide background information for this study, and they run the gamut from serious and informative to lighthearted and whimsical. On the serious side is a book that

explores how retired women get information (Chatman 1992). As part of a detailed and readable study, the author includes a section on the importance of the public library in the lives of retired women. She cites a survey on library use and programming, and talks about the role of librarians as information providers to the retired women. Interestingly, in another part of the book where she discusses interviews she had with the women about social networking, she finds herself in a dilemma when men in the retirement community where she is obtaining information want to take part in her study, too. A researcher's dream come true! The results of the survey on the importance of the public library in the lives of the women studied indicated that, although almost all respondents had a positive attitude regarding the library, many wished that books could be mailed to them. No other media were discussed in addition to books, and few attempts were made by respondents to contact librarians when they were in need of information. They tended to rely instead on fellow residents.

Another serious and well-rounded book is It's Not Quite Like Home: Illness, Career Descent, and the Stigma of Living at a Multilevel Care Retirement Facility (Fisher 1991). The depressing title of this book does not reflect the thorough work between its covers. A doctoral dissertation in its first incarnation, Home takes the reader through the author's three-year study of retirement living in a community where there is independent living, and assisted living with health care below the nursing home level. He addresses the problems of the well elderly in moving from their own homes to congregate housing, and the adjustments that must be made in areas

as broad as self-concept and self-esteem and as narrow as when to eat dinner in the dining room to maximize social contact. Every care is made to treat the concept of personhood in the elderly while conducting an exhaustive study of the dynamics of congregate retirement living. He concludes on a positive note, stressing that residents must do all they can to maintain their quality of life without waiting for the facility to provide everything they need.

On the lighter side are two articles that address the adjustment issue from the point of view of two residents who are living the life. One is even written by a social scientist and former chancellor of the New School for Social Research in New York (Ward 1993). Here the retirement community is viewed as a small town, complete with gossip and power politics, where it is possible to participate at the level of one's choice in the many activities offered. A philosophical attitude toward the vagaries of aging is advised, along with the enjoyment of new friendships and perhaps a fresh outlook on life.

In the same vein is "You're Playing Too Slowly; Your House Is the Wrong Color; Your Peonies Are Messy," a humorous look at some of the more annoying aspects of residential community living (Panitt 1993).

These articles provide background in understanding the lifestyle changes of older adults who move to retirement communities, whether they are seeking greater security, the company of others, or fewer home-related responsibilities. They also help in laying the groundwork for assessing the needs of retirement community residents beyond the physical aspects. Many of these needs, as it will become clear in the final section of this review,

involve those areas that are important to anyone regardless of age, personal growth and intellectual stimulation.

The next group of eleven articles provides a factual and statistical look at older Americans, their reading habits, and their relationship to the public library. Each of these articles is concerned that there are 32 million Americans 65 or older in the United States, and that the lifespan of this group is growing longer with each passing decade (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1994). One source cited by many authors was Betty Turock's Serving the Older Adult (1982). Turock's book discusses the 1972 National Survey of Library Services to the Aging, which showed that the elderly are not a high priority clientele for public libraries.

Based on Turock's statements that funding for services to the aging made up less than 1% of state and public library budgets, Anderson, Luster and Wollridge (1992) conducted a survey in the Pittsburgh area among active older adults in senior citizen centers to determine reading needs in older adults and to determine how scarce resources might be best spent on their behalf. They mention not only the content of the questionnaire, but the accommodations they made in format by making the print on the page larger and bolder and the paper an easier color to look at than the standard white. Results indicated a desire by 44% of the respondents for special programs at centers, and by 36.5% for materials delivered to the centers. A surprising 39% requested large print materials, and all indicated the importance of the library in their lives.

Using technological advances in the computer field to assist the older adult is the focus of Michael Burstein's "Electronic Book

Improves on Gutenberg" (1994). He portrays the virtual library as a very friendly place for seniors because of its many accommodations to the difficulties many older people experience with acuity of vision and dependability of movement.

In an analysis of population characteristics, Falcigno and Guynup (1984) divide the nation into geographic regions in an attempt to discover whether the elderly will be clustered in large metropolitan areas as previous library models have assumed, or whether they will be spread out into areas where there are fewer services. They find that non-metropolitan populations of the elderly are growing, and that services are not keeping pace with the population shift. They also address the issue of computer use by the elderly and the attendant issues of physical difficulties, unfamiliarity with technology, and increased cost. Nonetheless, the authors advise bringing the elderly together with others to plan appropriate services, and to keep in mind the greater challenges of a decentralized population group.

Fein (1994) focuses on the difficulties of growing older in a suburban setting where there is little mass transportation and few accommodations to the mobility needs of adults as they age. Fein compares statistics for people age 65 with those for people age 85 in the areas of gender, marital status, job status, public aid, personal care, mobility, education, income, and living arrangements to underscore the differences between the groups. Two areas stand out: In the area of personal care, only 14.5% of those age 65 require help, while 38.2% of those age 85 need assistance; in the area of mobility, 16.6% of 65-year-olds have limitations making it difficult to go

outside the home whereas 53.6% of 85-year-olds have such limitations. As a partial solution to these problems, she cites a Glen Rock, N.J. company called Companion Express which handles the transportation needs of the elderly in a suburban setting for a fee of $16 an hour.

Funding for library outreach programs for the elderly appears to be a problem in England as it is in the United States, although the excellent Guidelines for Library Services to People Who Are Housebound by the Library Association (1991) attempts to address that issue as well as those of staffing, materials, transportation, equipment, publicity, and administration in descriptive outline form.

With the British guidelines in hand, several of the programs described by Moore and Fisk (1988) in their article on improving library services to the aging population could be implemented. The authors describe the needs, based on demographic analysis, recognized by the Administration on Aging and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in a Memorandum of Understanding in 1985. The memorandum sought to find and create programs throughout the country that were meeting the library needs of older people.

There are two new sources of information on older adults put out by Gale. The Older Americans Information Directory (Bensing 1994) received good reviews as a source for information on agencies, databases, hotlines, discounts, and newsletters on aging, and would be most helpful to the patron. Of help to the researcher would be the Statistical Record of Older Americans (Segrist 1994), which includes the usual statistical information accompanied by

other items of interest such as opinion polls on areas such as retirement activities and quality of life expectations. Statistics cover a recent period, 1985 to 1991, with most census data derived from the 1990 census.

More evidence for the growth of the 80-110 age group is presented in Otten's "People Patterns: More Celebrating Their Centennial" (1995), which discusses the preliminary findings of Duke demographer Dr. James Vaupel and his research group in their ongoing study of aging patterns in the industrialized world.

Last in this group of sources is Stanley-Dunham's article (1989) on outreach programs. She emphasizes the importance of the Library Services and Construction Act, and its possible replacement, the Library Services Improvement Act, in funding creative new services for older Americans across the country. Some of these services will be detailed in the final section of this chapter. Another important area touched on in this article and in the following section is the need for libraries to adopt a marketing mentality in planning and reaching the elderly in the community. In stressing the importance of programming for the elderly, Stanley-Dunham quotes the New York State Librarian Joseph Shubert who urged librarians to use his ABC method of developing relevant programming for the elderly: "Allocate time to think of the elderly's needs, Borrow and view other institutions' tapes of elderly service programs..., and Communicate with state senators and assembly people about the importance for action on specific library aid bills" (Stanley-Dunham 1989, 12). The communication aspect of the method becomes even more important in light of the fact that the Library Services

Improvement Act combines funds from the Library Services and Construction Act with higher education funds, with the result being fewer dollars for libraries.

The Library Services and Construction Act seems to have released a torrent of creativity in developers of library programming. One example is "Lively Minds: the Travelling Library Learning Program," aimed at engaging the minds and imaginations of older people. Set up as a lifelong learning program for people in their 60s, 70s, and 80s, "Lively Minds" combines the talents of a librarian and an adult educator who use various resources in all kinds of media to illustrate topics. As with other successfully funded projects, "Lively Minds" includes a descriptive booklet so that the program can be duplicated elsewhere ("Nassau Finds That Elders Thrive On Using Their 'Lively Minds'" 1989).

LSCA funds also went to duplicate already successful programming. In Lincoln City, Oregon, where many of the residents are over the age of 65, the Driftwood Library's outreach program purchased a multimedia kit based on memories of times past from Bi-Folkal Productions of Madison, Wisconsin to encourage group participation for the elderly. In addition to purchase of the kit, an entire program had to be developed and implemented using staff and volunteers. Well-planned and well thought out, the Lincoln City program is a good example of activities that encourage older people to participate actively and to think of the library as a resource center rather than a book repository (Saunders 1992).

A third program funded by LSCA money was the Seattle-based "Read Aloud," where librarians and volunteers visited nursing homes

to read aloud to the residents. Although simple in design, this program got high marks from activity directors who thought it one of the very best they had seen. "Read Aloud" is an adaptation of a popular Waynesville, Ohio nursing home program called "Reading with Denny" which won an ALA Trustee's Award for Outreach Services in 1984. Part of the success of this program lay in prior planning, and in the development of a training manual that would enable other libraries to duplicate the program. With government funding drying up, Seattle planned to keep its project afloat by seeking funds from corporate foundations and other sources. The creator of the original program, Dennis Dalton, feels strongly that all citizens have a right to library service, even if it means bringing the library to them (Watson 1987).

Although the LSCA-sponsored programs are notable for their breadth, depth, and potential for duplication, other creative library programs for seniors exist in numerous fields. In the area of storytelling, the Camden County (NJ) Library created "You Are the Vital Link," a series of workshops to teach storytelling skills to grandparents with the idea in mind of creating an oral history in story form for grandchildren to enjoy and remember ("AL Aside" 1994).

Related to storytelling is senior booktalking, where a librarian visits various senior communities and gives book talks on a variety of subjects on a regular basis. The author of the article on senior booktalking suggests not limiting yourself to books, but to listen to the interests of the community and read from many sources (May 1990).

From booktalking, the next logical step is talking books, an obvious choice on the part of librarians for those with limited vision. The elderly residents most likely to benefit from these books are sometimes the least likely to ask for them, although libraries see heavy circulation of audiobooks to people who listen to them in their cars. The reasons for this discrepancy are not clear. Jennifer Anjier, a Louisiana regional librarian, found that it took some outreach work with senior residents and activities directors to get a program going, but that it was soon very successful ("Hear Any Good Books Lately?" 1994).

Another traditional method of reaching seniors is through the bookmobile, which brings selections from the library to the retirement complex or senior center, sometimes as often as every week. In addition to standard bookmobile service, the Topeka Public Library has put forth a new commitment to serving the aging in their population and has come up with several novel programs, some of which encompass the volunteer efforts of seniors themselves. Their philosophy is to "be accountable for and to allocate an appropriate share of library resources to serve older adults as a group, in cognizance of any special needs involved" (Tevis and Crawley 1988, 38). Services include a Low Vision Center, Red Carpet Service (bookmobile), the distribution of vision aids, and the "Delta Gamma Kit," which contains special templates for people with vision problems to aid with signing checks, writing envelopes, and other everyday writing tasks.

An Athens, Georgia program stresses participation on the part of the members of a weekly reading group for residents of a local

retirement community. With a librarian as discussion leader, the conversation can often leave the topic of the book being discussed and go where the participants wish. This group is only one of many discussed by Lear (1984) in her article on reading programs for older adults. The idea of this program and others like it, such as the Senior Center Humanities Program which involves literature discussion, is to give older people an outlet for their creative processes and intellectual pursuits.

In Ohio, McDonald (1994) emphasizes networking with senior groups, collection development in areas such as caregiver resources, wellness, investments and intergenerational opportunities, coupled with orientation programs to introduce new technology to the older population served by the Toledo Lucas County Library System.

Another program for seniors that focuses on the humanities is "Silver Editions II," discussed in the introductory chapter, which was developed by the National Council on Aging in order to provide public library centered programming (Liroff and Van Fleet 1992).

It is not only in the delivery of materials that there is a new focus on older adults. Publishers, too, are becoming aware of the older customer, and plans are in the making to try to meet the needs of older readers, sweeping away the negative ideas associated with old age (Crichton 1989).

Many of the authors cited mention the lack of information about what older readers want to read, or where their areas of interest lie. For an educational program to succeed it must meet the needs and wants of the participants, but the research is lacking in this field. Planners need to know something about the people they

are planning for-- how much education they have, and what their interests are (Lehr 1984).

Programmers should also consider what Wolfe calls the five key concepts of marketing to older people: "autonomy and self-sufficiency, social and spiritual connectedness, altruism, personal growth, and revitalization" (Wolfe 1994, 32). Seniors, Wolfe feels, are not particularly interested in escapist activities as younger people are. Instead, they would often rather incorporate more productive activities into their lives for greater personal satisfaction.

CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed the survey method to collect the appropriate data. The questionnaire used was designed to collect data on general background information, reading habits, and library use (see Appendix A). The subjects queried were all residents of the independent living area of Westlake Village, a retirement complex in Westlake, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. The library serving Westlake Village is Porter Public Library in Westlake, Ohio.

Westlake Village is owned by Fort Austin Limited Partnership, which is an affiliate of American Retirement Corporation of Brentwood, Tennessee and is managed by A.R.C. Management Corporation. A.R.C. currently manages twenty-two retirement communities in fifteen states. No age limitations are mentioned in the information about the community, but it is assumed that residents will be retired.

The facility provides a library, a bank, an activities room, an ice cream parlor, a pub and billiards room, an arts and crafts room, and a fitness center for the residents. Many of the residents have their own cars, but many others no longer drive.

Church services, community college classes, films, and programs are all held on the premises for the residents. In addition, Porter Public Library furnishes the onsite library with books. There are several bridge, pinochle and Tripoly groups. Westlake Village

provides bus and van service to grocery stores and doctors' offices within a given radius.

Westlake Village consists of three 3-story buildings connected at the center by common rooms. In addition there are cottages on the grounds for non-apartment living with a pond and bridge separating the two areas.

The community is very active, with residents pursuing varied interests. After an initial trial on a small group of residents, the survey was made available to all. The completed surveys were collected at the front desk of the complex so as to encourage participation. No postage costs were involved. The residents were provided with an envelope in which to seal their completed questionnaires, in order to protect their anonymity.

When the questionnaires were completed and returned, the data therein was recorded and tabulated. Responses were analyzed by age group, gender, education, occupation, and living arrangement. Reading habits and library services desired were compared to the above factors to see whether a significant relationship existed between them.

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS

A total of 180 questionnaires were distributed to residents' internal mailboxes of which 65 (36%) were returned. All 65 were usable. The majority of respondents fell within the 70-89 age bracket, with 21 in the 70-79 group (32.31%) and 34 in the 80-89 group (52.31%) for a total of 55 (84.62%). There were 6 respondents (9.23%) in the 90-99 age group, 3 respondents (4.61%) in the 60-69 age group, and 1 respondent (1.54%) in the 100-109 age group (see Table 1). There were 14 males (21.54%) who responded and 51 females (78.46%) (see Table 2). Those who live alone numbered 51 (78.46%) and those who live with another numbered 14 (21.54%) (see Table 3).

The next area of study was the highest level of education achieved. In this case, 1 person (1.54%) had completed the elementary level, 21 persons (32.31%) had completed the high school level, 28 persons (43.08%) had completed some college, 10 persons (15.38%) had graduated from college, and 5 persons (7.69) had gone to graduate school (see Table 4).

There was a wide variety of occupations within the group. The eleven most prevalent, making up 83.05% of the group, were homemaker (15.38%), manager/supervisor (12.31%), administrative assistant/executive secretary (12.31%), nurse (9.23), teacher (7.69%), clerical worker (6.15%), accounting (4.61%), insurance (4.61%), sales (4.61), scientific professional (4.61%), and librarian (1.54%) (see

Table 5). The majority of respondents held white or pink collar positions prior to retirement.

Concerning time spent per week reading, 39 people (60%) spent 5 or more hours either reading or listening to books. In addition, 16 people (24.61%) spent 3-4 hours, 8 people (12.31%) spent 1-2 hours, and 2 people (3.08%) spent less than 1 hour reading in a given week (see Table 6).

Of the 21 book subject areas in the survey, respondents greatly preferred biography (66.15%) and mystery (63.08%), followed by romance (44.62%) and news/world affairs (43.08%). Least favored by the group were science fiction (7.69%), genealogy (6.15%), sports (4.61%), and the occult (1.54%) (see Table 7).

To determine types of services desired, the original survey listed book talks, large print books, and audio books. The pilot group surveyed suggested the addition of regular print books, which elicited a high response rate (56.92%). Book talks were requested by 21.54%, large print books by 56.92%, and audio books by 13.85% (see Table 8).

Cross tabulation analyses were carried out to determine whether the areas studied were related to each other in any way. The first area analyzed in this manner was age and its relation to time spent reading in a week's time (see Table 9), and the desire for various services such as book talks, large print books, regular print books, and audio books (see Table 10).

Age did appear to be a factor in the amount of time spent reading. Whereas it might be expected that amount of time spent reading might decrease with age, this study showed a progression

from low numbers for the early retirement years to a peak in the 80-89 year bracket. The same holds true for three other areas: book talks, large print books, and regular print books. Only in the area of audio books are the results mixed. Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that several residents expressed an unfamiliarity with audio books, even though they had heard of Talking Books for the Blind.

The second factor considered for cross tabulation analysis was gender and time spent reading in a week's time (see Table 11). Another cross tabluation analysis was done to determine the desire based on gender for book talks, large print books, regular print books, and audio books (see Table 12).

Except for one time period (1-2 hours/week for males), the numbers for males and females progressed steadily upward for time spent reading. Many more of both genders spent 5 or more hours each week reading than those that spent less than one hour. This finding would indicate that reading is an important activity for this group regardless of gender. Women were much more likely than men to request book talks and audio books. Women were somewhat more likely to request large print books, and regular print books were requested frequently by both genders.

The third factor assessed was the relationship between living arrangements and time spent reading in a week (see Table 13), and the desire for library services such as book talks, large print books, regular print books, and audio books (Table 14).

Living arrangement was not a factor in time per week spent reading. If the respondent lived alone or not, the numbers of people

in each category went up as the number of hours per week increased.

There was a difference in the requests for book talks between those living alone and those living with another. All of those who requested book talks lived alone. In the other three categories no apparent relationship existed.

The fourth factor under consideration was the relationship between the highest level of education achieved and time per week spent reading (see Table 15), as well as the desire for book talks, large print books, regular print books, and for audio books (see Table 16).

There was no relationship between formal education and time spent reading, an indication that one of the most valuable life skills, literacy, is one that serves from a very early age throughout a lifetime.

In the areas of book talks and regular print books, requests were highest among those with some college education. Other results were mixed.

The fifth area studied was that of occupation in tandem with book talks, large and regular print books, and audio books (see Table 17). In this category only two findings stand out. Those who had been homemakers had a much greater desire for large print books, and those who had been managers or supervisors had a much greater desire for regular print books. Otherwise the requests were fairly evenly divided among the occupations.

The sixth and last area considered concerned a cross tabulation analyis between the media preferred (book talk, large print, regular print, or audio book) and the subject area covered (see Table 18).

In the top 10 subject areas, the number of requests for large print and regular print books was high. Requests for book talks, however, tended to be more scattershot among the more popular and less popular subject areas, possibly because some of the less popular subject areas (such as nature, retirement, and mythology) might lend themselves well to oral presentation. The results for audio books showed little relation to subject area.

Table 1.

Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	f	%
60-69	3	4.61
70-79	21	32.31
80-89	34	52.31
90-99	6	9.23
100-109	1	1.54
Total	65	100.00

Table 2.

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	f	%
Male	14	21.54
Female	51	78.46
Total	65	100.00

Table 3.

Distribution of Respondents by Living Arrangement

Living Arrangement	f	%
Live Alone	51	78.46
Live with Other	14	21.54
Total	65	100.00

Table 4.

Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Highest Level of Education	f	%
Elementary	1	1.54
High School	21	32.31
Some College	28	43.08
College Graduate	10	15.38
Graduate School	5	7.69
Total	65	100.00

Table 5.

Distribution of Eleven Most Frequent Occupations

Occupation	f	%
Homemaker	10	15.38
Manager/Supervisor	8	12.31
Admin. Asst./Exec. Secretary	8	12.31
Nurse	6	9.23
Teacher	5	7.69
Clerical Worker	4	6.15
Accounting	3	4.61
Insurance	3	4.61
Sales	3	4.61
Scientific	3	4.61
Librarian	1	1.54
Total	54	83.05

Table 6.

Distribution of Respondents by Time Spent Reading

Time per Week Spent Reading	f	%
<1 Hour	2	3.08
1-2 Hours	8	12.31
3-4 Hours	16	24.61
5 or More Hours	39	60.00
Total	65	100.00

Table 7.

Distribution of Type of Book Read by Respondents

Type of Book	f	%
Biography	43	66.15
Mystery	41	63.08
Romance	29	44.62
News & World Affairs	28	43.08
History	24	36.92
Adventure	23	35.38
Medical or Health	21	32.31
Travel	21	32.31
Bible	19	29.23
Nature/Wildlife	19	29.23
Retirement Information	17	26.15
Self-Improvement	13	20.00
Other Religious Books	13	20.00
Fine Arts	9	13.85
Mythology	9	13.85
Crafts	7	10.77
Westerns	7	10.77
Science Fiction	5	7.69
Genealogy	4	6.15
Sports	3	4.61
Occult	1	1.54

Table 8.

Distribution of Types of Services Desired

Service	f	%
Book Talks	14	21.54
Large Print Books	37	56.92
Regular Print Books	37	56.92
Audio Books	9	13.85

Table 9.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of the Relationship Between Age and Time Spent Reading

	Time per Week Spent Reading in Hours									
	<1		1-2		3-4		5+		Total	
Age	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
60-69	0	0	0	0	2	3.08	1	1.54	3	4.61
70-79	1	1.54	6	9.23	2	3.08	12	18.46	21	32.31
80-89	1	1.54	2	3.08	8	12.31	22	33.85	33	50.77
90-99	0	0	0	0	4	6.15	2	3.08	7	10.77
100-109	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.54	1	1.54
Total	2	3.08	8	12.31	16	24.62	38	58.47	65	100.00

Table 10.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of Age
by Type of Service Desired

Age	Type of Service Desired: Book Talks f	Book Talks %	Large Print Books f	Large Print Books %	Regular Print Books f	Regular Print Books %	Audio Books f	Audio Books %
60-69	0	0	2	3.08	3	4.61	1	1.54
70-79	1	1.54	13	20.00	13	20.00	4	6.15
80-89	10	15.38	17	26.15	20	30.77	1	1.54
90-99	3	4.61	3	4.61	1	1.54	2	3.08
100-109	0	0	1	1.54	0	0	1	1.54
Total	14	21.53	36	55.38	37	56.92	9	13.85

Table 11.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of the Relationship Between
Gender and Time Spent Reading

Gender	Time per Week Spent Reading in Hours: <1 f	<1 %	1-2 f	1-2 %	3-4 f	3-4 %	5+ f	5+ %	Total f	Total %
Male	1	1.54	0	0	5	7.69	8	12.31	14	21.54
Female	1	1.54	8	12.31	11	16.92	31	47.69	51	78.46
Total	2	3.08	8	12.31	16	24.61	39	60.00	65	100.00

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Table 12.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of Gender
by Type of Service Desired

Gender	Type of Service Desired: Book Talks f	Book Talks %	Large Print Books f	Large Print Books %	Regular Print Books f	Regular Print Books %	Audio Books f	Audio Books %
Male	1	1.54	6	9.23	10	15.38	1	1.54
Female	13	20.00	31	47.69	27	41.54	8	12.31
Total	14	21.54	37	56.92	37	56.92	9	13.85

Table 13.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of the Relationship Between
Living Arrangement and Time Spent Reading

Living Arrangement	Time Spent Reading per Week in Hours: <1 f	<1 %	1-2 f	1-2 %	3-4 f	3-4 %	5+ f	5+ %	Total f	Total %
Alone	2	3.08	8	12.31	12	18.46	29	44.61	51	78.46
Not Alone	0	0	0	0	4	6.15	10	15.38	14	21.54
Total	2	3.08	8	12.31	16	24.61	39	60.00	65	100.00

Table 14.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of Living Arrangement
by Type of Service Desired

Living Arrangement	Type of Service Desired: Book Talks		Large Print Books		Regular Print Books		Audio Books	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Alone	14	21.54	30	46.15	29	44.61	7	10.77
Not Alone	0	0	5	7.69	8	12 31	2	3.08
Total	14	21.54	35	54.84	37	56.92	9	13.85

Table 15.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of the Relationship Between Education and Time Spent Reading

Education	Time per Week Spent Reading in Hours								Total	
	<1		1-2		3-4		5+			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Elementary	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1.54	1	1.54
High School	1	1.54	7	10.77	5	7.69	8	12.31	21	32.31
Some College	0	0	1	1.54	9	13.85	18	27.69	28	43.08
College Grad	1	1.54	0	0	1	1.54	8	12.31	10	15.38
Graduate School	0	0	0	0	1	1.54	4	6.15	5	7.69
Total	2	3.08	8	12.31	16	24.61	39	60.00	65	100.00

Table 16.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of Education
by Type of Service Desired

Education	Type of Service Desired: Book Talks f	Book Talks %	Large Print Books f	Large Print Books %	Regular Print Books f	Regular Print Books %	Audio Books f	Audio Books %
Elementary	0	0	1	1.54	1	1.54	0	0
High School	2	3.08	14	21.54	7	10.77	3	4.61
Some College	6	9.23	13	20.00	19	29.23	3	4.61
College Grad	2	3.08	4	6.15	5	7.69	2	3.08
Graduate School	3	4.61	5	7.69	5	7.69	1	1.54
Total	13	20.00	37	56.92	37	56.92	9	13.85

Table 17.

Cross Tabulation Analysis of Occupation
by Type of Service Desired

Occupation	Type of Service Desired: Book Talks f	Book Talks %	Large Print Books f	Large Print Books %	Regular Print Books f	Regular Print Books %	Audio Books f	Audio Books %
Homemaker	2	3.08	6	9.23	3	4.61	3	4.61
Manager/ Supervisor	0	0	3	4.61	7	10.77	0	0
Admin. Asst./ Exec. Sect'y	2	3.08	4	6.15	6	9.23	1	1.54
Nurse	1	1.54	4	6.15	3	4.61	0	0
Teacher	2	3.08	3	4.61	3	4.61	1	1.54
Clerical Worker	1	1.54	2	3.08	3	4.61	1	1.54
Accounting	1	1.54	2	3.08	2	3.08	0	0
Insurance	1	1.54	0	0	2	3.08	0	0
Sales	0	0	2	3.08	1	1.54	0	0
Scientific	0	0	2	3.08	2	3.08	0	0
Librarian	1	1.54	1	1.54	1	1.54	0	0
Total	11	16.92	29	44.61	33	50.77	6	9.23

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Table 18.
Cross Tabulation Analysis of the Relationship Between Media and Subject Area Preferred

Subject Area	Book Talks		Large Print Books		Regular Print Books		Audio Books	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Biography	10	15.38	28	43.08	24	36.92	8	12.31
Mystery	10	15.38	23	35.38	29	44.61	5	7.69
Romance	5	7.69	19	29.23	16	24.61	2	3.08
News	7	10.77	17	26.15	20	30.77	6	9.23
History	9	13.85	16	24.61	18	27.69	4	6.15
Adventure	3	4.61	12	18.46	14	21.54	1	1.54
Medicine	5	7.69	14	21.54	12	18.46	1	1.54
Travel	9	13.85	14	21.54	12	18.46	6	9.23
Bible	4	6.15	9	13.85	13	20.00	3	4.61
Nature	4	6.15	12	18.46	13	20.00	5	7.69
Retirement	5	7.69	9	13.85	11	16.92	1	1.54
Self Imp.	4	6.15	6	9.23	9	13.85	0	0
Religion	2	3.08	9	13.85	10	15.38	2	3.08
Fine Arts	1	1.54	6	9.23	6	9.23	1	1.54
Myth	4	6.15	8	12.31	8	12.31	1	1.54
Crafts	0	0	3	4.61	6	9.23	2	3.08
Western	0	0	4	6.15	5	7.69	0	0
Sci Fi	1	1.54	3	4.61	3	4.61	1	1.54
Genealogy	0	0	4	6.15	3	4.61	0	0
Sports	1	1.54	1	1.54	2	3.08	2	3.08
Occult	0	0	1	1.54	0	0	0	0

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CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS

For the survey respondents from Westlake Village in Westlake, Ohio, age appears to be the most important factor linked to their reading habits, with the survey results showing that the importance of reading is strongest in the 80-89 year old age group. More data would be useful in both the 60-69 and 100-109 year old groups.

Various types of media are of interest to this group, especially large print books and regular print books. More information was requested by some concerning audio books. From the statistics it is possible to conclude that women in this group are far more interested in both book talks and audio books than men are, and that book talks are much more appealing to those who live alone than to those who live with another. Because there was no relationship within this group between education level and time spent reading, it can be concluded that a skill learned at the very beginning of formal education can provide an entire lifetime of interest and enjoyment. No one is forcing the retired person to read; he or she reads for the enjoyment it gives. Neither did it seem to matter what one's occupation was. Reading is important to all.

It can be concluded for this group of respondents that reading plays a vital role in their lives, one that increases from the years of

early retirement into the years of later retirement and only tapers off in the very latest years with interest still strong. Further research at other retirement communities would be very valuable in helping libraries plan outreach services for the growing population of well elderly with a wide variety of interests.

APPENDIX A

RE: STUDY OF READING HABITS AND LIBRARY USE AT WESTLAKE VILLAGE, WESTLAKE, OHIO

November 7, 1994

Dear Resident:

This letter is an invitation to participate in a survey of Westlake Village residents to evaluate reading habits and library use. I am conducting this survey in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree in library science, but it is also my hope that the results will help Porter Public Library in the ongoing evaluation of their service to Westlake Village.

The survey is completely anonymous and confidential. Neither I nor anyone else will know who submitted which survey. Only group data will be compiled.

Your cooperation is essential to the success of this study, but there is no penalty should you not wish to participate. In addition, you can cease participation in the survey at any time. These are conditions of all research conducted at Kent by means of anonymous questionnaires.

If you have any questions, please call me at (216) 967-9408 or Dr. Lois Buttlar, my research advisor, at (216) 672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger at (216) 672-2651.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please return the completed questionnaire in the envelope provided to the front desk by November 21, 1994.

Sincerely,

Jane Caldwell Varley
Graduate Student

STUDY OF READING HABITS
AND LIBRARY USE
AT WESTLAKE VILLAGE
WESTLAKE, OHIO

PLEASE RETURN THIS ANONYMOUS SURVEY, SEALED IN ENVELOPE PROVIDED, TO THE FRONT DESK BY NOV. 21ST.

PLEASE CIRCLE OR FILL IN THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER.

1. WHAT IS YOUR AGE GROUP?

   50-59 60-69 70-79 80-89 90-99

2. ARE YOU MALE OR FEMALE? MALE FEMALE

3. DO YOU LIVE ALONE? YES NO

4. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION COMPLETED?

   ELEMENTARY HIGH SCHOOL SOME COLLEGE
   COLLEGE GRADUATE GRADUATE SCHOOL

5. WHAT IS/WAS YOUR OCCUPATION? _____

6. HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU SPEND READING EACH WEEK?

   LESS THAN 1 HOUR 1-2 HOURS 3-4 HOURS 5+ HOURS

7. WHAT TYPE OF BOOK DO YOU ENJOY READING?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

BIOGRAPHY	FINE ARTS	SCIENCE FICTION
CRAFTS	HISTORY	RETIREMENT INFO.
MYTHOLOGY	TRAVEL	NEWS & WORLD AFFAIRS
WESTERNS	SPORTS	NATURE/WILDLIFE
ROMANCE	BIBLE	OTHER RELIGIOUS BOOKS
ADVENTURE	GENEALOGY	MEDICAL OR HEALTH
MYSTERY	OCCULT	SELF-IMPROVEMENT

8. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING LIBRARY SERVICES ARE OF INTEREST TO YOU?

(PLEASE CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

LARGE-PRINT BOOKS	AUDIO BOOKS ON TAPE
REGULAR-PRINT BOOKS	BOOK TALKS

REFERENCE LIST

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